

STATE HOUSE E-REPORT

116th Indiana General Assembly, 2009 Interim, Number 1



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November 9, 2009

VETERANS DAY and BENEFITS FOR INDIANA VETERANS

At this time of year, we pause to recognize those individuals who have served our country through the military.

As Veterans Day draws near (Wednesday, November 11), it is important to honor our veterans and thank them for their service.

We can all help teach the next generation about the importance of this commemoration and the importance of honoring veterans and remembering why they deserve our appreciation.

As lawmakers, we have worked together to pass a number of new laws designed to help veterans. Unfortunately, too few people are aware of the programs and services that are available.

Please thank the veterans you know and ask if they are aware of the benefits Indiana can provide them:

STATE BENEFITS FOR MILITARY VETERANS AND FAMILIES

- ★ Current members of the active branches of service, National Guard and Reserves are **eligible to receive an exemption of \$5,000 on their state income tax return**. Veterans who are military retirees over age 60 are eligible for the same exemption.
- ★ **Military pay earned while under orders to a combat zone is exempt from state taxes**. Remember that this exemption and the \$5,000 exemption cannot be claimed on the same return. It must be one or the other, but not both.
- ★ Families of Hoosiers on active duty may apply for **emergency grants for food, housing, utilities, medical services, transportation and other essential support services**. Contact your local County Veterans' Service Officer or the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) at 1-800-400-4520.
- ★ Purple Heart recipients are eligible to attend a state-supported college or university in Indiana **without paying fees**. The same benefit may be available to children of disabled Hoosier veterans.
- ★ The **Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children** makes sure that there are no problems in transferring records or credits whenever a family is transferred from one state to another.
- ★ If you are a family member of a veteran ordered to active duty, you may be eligible for an unpaid **leave of absence of up to 10 days from your place of employment**.
- ★ The IDVA provides a **Women Veterans Coordinator** to assist female veterans with claims and applications. Call (317) 232-3921 or email kabertrand@dva.in.gov.

STATE BENEFITS FOR NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVES

- ★ Through **the Hoosier Veterans Seamless Transition Program**, people can meet with various agencies at a centralized location to get help with the processing of federal and state claims and applications.
- ★ State employees called to active duty in the National Guard or Reserves are entitled to **receive the difference between their military pay and their state salary**.
- ★ Indiana National Guard members can receive **free tuition** when attending state colleges or universities to obtain their first Associate or Bachelor degree.

- ★ The spouse and children of any National Guard member who suffered a service-connected death **will not have to pay tuition or fees** when attending any state-supported college or university.
- ★ Indiana National Guard members who work for the state receive **15 days of military leave per year**.
- ★ Any National Guard member who has served on active duty for more than 30 days is entitled to **priority for placement in any employment or training program** administered by the state for up to one (1) year after discharge if the member is otherwise eligible for the program. This law also applies to the spouse of the Guard member.

For more information on any of these programs and benefits, or if you want to reach me for any other reason, please contact me through the toll-free State House telephone number of 1-800-382-9842, writing to me in care of the Indiana House of Representatives, Room 403 State House, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786, or by email at h75@in.gov.



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